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ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide is intended to introduce elementary school students to fables. The authors suggest that the fables not be studied as a unit, but that they be used periodically along with other genres of literature. The guide is organized into the following categories: (1) fables with animals, (2) fables with people, (3) inanimate objects, (4) animals wearing other animals' skins, (5) anthology, and (6) proverbs. In addition to the fables themselves, the guide also includes suggested teaching activities, questions for class discussion, and numerous illustrations. (See CS 200 501-CS 200 508 for related documents.) (DI)

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Literature Curriculum, Levels C - D

FABLES

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CS 200 500

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THE FABLE

Entertaining; short; characters with human foibles; single incident with a lesson to be observed. This, in essence, is the fable. These time-tested tales entertained children and adults for centuries before they were ever written down. Although there is much speculation as to the origin of these short, short stories, most authorities give credit to Aesop, a Greek slave, who verbalized their truths long before anyone recorded any of them for future generations to enjoy. Stories with like themes have been discovered in the ancient records of Egypt, China, India and other middle eastern and Asiatic countries, so it is difficult to pin them down to any one source.

What makes these brief, didactic tales so popular with everyone? Certainly it isn't because each one contains a moral; for no one, regardless of age, likes to be continually admonished concerning the virtues we should emulate or the bad behavior we should avoid. Perhaps more than anything else the greatest appeal of the fable is the universality of the themes portrayed. Virtues such as moderation, patience, foresight, discretion, and prudence are admirable qualities that every ordinary person can strive for. Vices such as savagery, greed, impudence, excessiveness, and other faults can be avoided if a person makes an honest effort. The average person can recognize himself and his neighbor in the various episodes. The fable becomes the scapegoat for our own failures and in a gentle way encourages us to be better.

There are usually two and seldom more than three characters in a fable. The most popular ones use animals to illustrate the truths to be learned. Your children should recognize the difference between animal stories which are fables and those which are not. In some of the tales the animals represent different facets of human nature. The ass always portrays obstinacy and stupidity, the wolf greed and savagery, the lion kingliness, the sheep simplicity or foolishness, and the fox cunning trickery. In the fable the animal is used to illustrate a moral principle which is sometimes implied and at other times stated succinctly at the end.

At times an inanimate object takes on human characteristics, as in "The Wind and the Sun" or "The Stomach's Answer," and occasionally people illustrate the moral as in "The Milkmaid" or "The Boy and the Wolf." When human beings are the characters they become symbolic of a personality trait. The milkmaid symbolizes careless impatience, the boy foolish trickery.

In our country Aesop's fables are the best known. William Caxton is credited with giving us the first English edition of Aesop's fables as early as 1484. In France Jean de la Fontaine made an art of telling the fables in verse form to the delight of children, but the French rhymes lose some of their appeal when translated. Many of his fables are

related to his own time and country, and were used to satirize his contemporaries. In India, the Jataka tales are popular. These stories are related to the myriad births of the Buddha. Also in India we find a Hindu collection called the Panchatantra, meaning Five Books. The animals in these stories are human beings who wear animal masks and do not act in a typical animalistic manner. In Arabia the fables of Bidpai are best known.

It is important that we include fables as a part of the literary background of children. They provide an understanding of current expressions and allusions in everyday conversations. Youngsters have heard expressions like "the lion's share," "sour grapes," "wolf in sheep's clothing," and "dog in the manger," and no doubt have already become familiar with the best-known fables.

Rather than treating fables as a group of stories to be studied in a unit, we are suggesting that you use them periodically along with the other genres. In some instances there will be a definite relationship between the fable and the stories in the next unit. At other times the fable may be a simple five-minute experience. Children should not be required to dwell for long periods of time on them. Giving too many at a time would only be confusing and tiresome. Although these stories appeal because of their brevity and dramatic effect, and because the animals take on human qualities, children can become weary of continued moralizing.

Organization of Unit

Fables with Animals
- Questions about story interpretation
- Animals with human qualities
- Special characteristics
- The moral

Fables with People
- Same fable - from two different countries

Inanimate objects
- Same moral - two different stories

Animals wearing other animals' skins

Anthology

Proverbs

TEACHER READINESS SUGGESTIONS:

THE FABLE

"Don't count your chickens before they are hatched."

"Honesty is the best policy."

"United we stand, divided we fall."

"Don't be like the boy who cried, 'Wolf.'"

"Sour grapes."

"You took the lion's share."

No doubt you have heard one or more of these famous sayings at some time in your life. These and hundreds of others came to us from ancient stories called fables. In fact these little stories are so old that some poeple claim they have been in existence since the days of the ancient Egyptians as long ago as 1200 B. C. ! Children all over the world have heard these stories and told them to their children and so on and on. No one is sure who the author of the first fables was, and it is very likely that there really was no one person who can take the credit. But many writers since have taken these old tales and rewritten them for the enjoyment of boys and girls everywhere. In our country the most popular fables are Aesop's fables. They are called Aesop's because it is believed that a very long time ago there was a Greek slave named Aesop who told many stories just like these.

As you read these fables see if you can decide why they are still favorites with children and adults.

Possible extension for the unit on Fables:

Teacher: You may wish to develop a chart as you go through the fables. It can be used for review at the end of the unit or at the end of each group of fables. It will allow students the opportunity to note likenesses and differences in fables that use animals, people, and inanimate objects as main characters. The students should help you complete the chart. Here is a chart form:

	Main character	What he did	One or two words that describe the main character	The Moral
Name of the fable on left hand side of paper.				

Teacher: The first two fables will be familiar to some of your students. Each one may possibly bring to mind similar circumstances from their own lives.

I. "The Dog and His Reflection"

Suggested Procedure:

1. Did you ever trade something you had for something you thought was better but you discovered it was broken when you got it? How did you feel? What did you learn from the experience?

2. Something similar to this happened to the dog. Read "The Dog and His Reflection."

3. What happened to the dog in this story?

4. What did the dog learn from his experience?

THE DOG AND HIS REFLECTION

Once there was a dog who was very greedy. He was also very sneaky. One day the dog saw a piece of meat hanging in the window of a butcher shop. "Ah," thought the dog, "that is just what I want for my supper."

The dog waited until no one was watching. Then he jumped up and grabbed the piece of meat. One of the men in the butcher shop tried to stop him but the dog was too quick. He ran through the town as fast as he could and no one could catch him.

After a while the dog came to a park. In the park was a pond with a footbridge over it. "Well," said the dog to himself, "this looks like a nice place for me to enjoy my supper." The dog sat down on the bridge and started to eat. But, just as he was about to take his first bite, the dog stopped. He saw something very strange. There, sitting on the pond in front of him, was another dog exactly like him, and in the other dog's mouth was a piece of meat just like the one he had. "Hm," thought the dog, "if I steal this other dog's food, then I will have two pieces of meat for supper." So

the dog was very still and pretended not to notice the other dog. Then, quick as a flash, he jumped out and grabbed for the other dog's piece of meat. But, instead of a piece of meat, what the dog found was a mouthful of water. SPLASH! Into the pond he went.

You see, there really was no other dog. What the dog had seen was his own reflection on the water. When he tried to take the other dog's piece of meat, all he did was get very, very wet and lose his own piece of meat. That is what happens to dogs (and people) who are greedy.

PEOPLE WHO TRY TO GRAB TOO MUCH END UP WITH NOTHING.

II. "The House Mouse and the Field Mouse"

Introduction: Have you ever tried to make a housepet of a "wild" animal--a squirrel or a bird or a rabbit? These animals have spent all their lives outdoors. What might scare them about living in a house? Why? Would your cats and dogs be frightened of the same things? Suppose you couldn't live in a house anymore, and you had to make your home outdoors in a forest. What might frighten you? What would you miss about house living? This fable about a house mouse and a field mouse deals with just these questions.

Questions:

1. Why didn't Sam want to become a "field" mouse?
2. What happens when Tom and Sam try to get a meal in the house?
3. If you were the field mouse would you have stayed in the house? Why or why not?

Possible Extension:

The students might want to write a story about an experience they have had or might imagine having on a first visit to the city or the country.

THE HOUSE MOUSE AND THE FIELD MOUSE

Once upon a time there were two mice who were brothers. Sam, the fat brother, lived in the house; Tom, who was skinny, lived outside in the yard. One day Sam went outdoors to visit Tom. Tom was very happy to see his brother. He welcomed Sam to his little burrow behind the garage and offered him some choice scraps from the garbage can. "Here, brother," Tom said, "look at all the good things I saved for your visit. Here is a piece of old cheese and some wilted lettuce, and for dessert we have a nice pile of stale cake crumbs."

"Ick," said Sam. "How can you eat this stuff? No wonder you are so thin. Come back to the house with me. A life out here in the yard is bad for a mouse." So Sam, the fat brother, took Tom, the thin one, back to the house. Tom thought Sam's home was fine; his brother had made himself a nice, cozy apartment in the linen closet with little chairs and couches and a table. Sam even had a tiny feather bed to sleep on.

"Now," Sam said to his brother, "we must go out in the kitchen and get ourselves something to eat." Sam showed him the way to the kitchen. The family of the house had just finished eating their supper; on the table were plates with delicious scraps of roast beef and baked potatoes and bread and butter. "Um," said Tom, "you certainly have the life. No wonder you are so fat. I think I will stay here with you, Sam."

But just then Tom heard a low, growling noise. He turned around, and there, at the other end of the table, was the family dog. "Yipes," said Tom, "let's get out of here!"

Tom and Sam ran for the linen closet with the dog chasing right behind. They barely got inside before the dog caught up with them. Sam was so out of breath from running that he could barely speak. "Are you all right?" asked Tom. Finally, Sam managed to catch his breath. He answered his brother: "Of course, I'm all right. You don't think I'm going to let a dog scare me, do you?"

"Well," said Tom, "maybe that dog didn't scare you, but he certainly scared me. I'm going back to the yard. Perhaps the food isn't as fancy out there, but at least I can eat my dinner in peace."

"But," said Sam, "think of all those delicious scraps!"

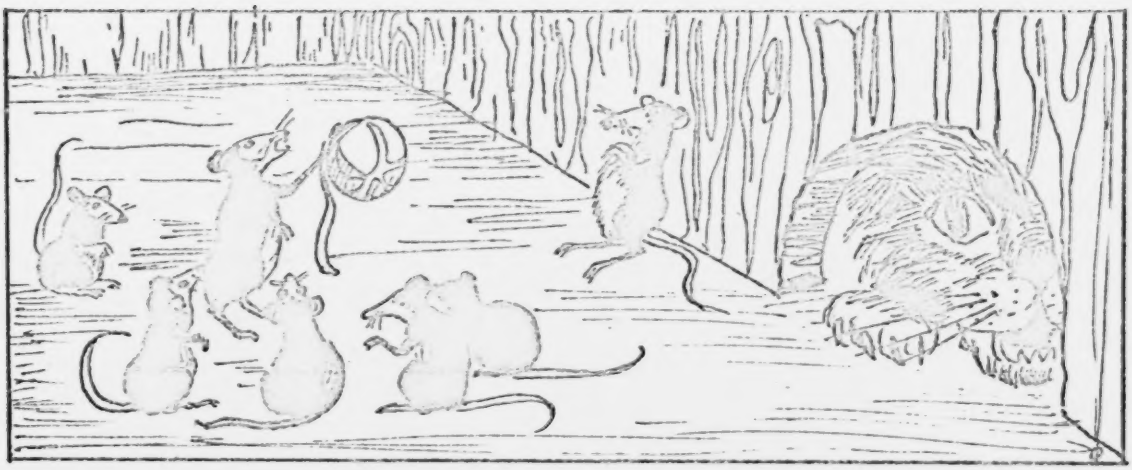
"Brother," said Tom, "there is a lesson you will have to learn.

FOOD TASTES GOOD ONLY IF YOU LIVE TO ENJOY IT."

III. "Belling the Cat"

Suggested Procedure:

1. Why is the young mouse so proud? How do you think he feels after the old mouse asks who will bell the cat?
2. Can you think of a way a mouse might bell a cat?
3. The mice learn that it is easier to talk than act. Have you ever had this feeling? When? Why?



BELLING THE CAT

As you know, mice and cats have always been enemies; and usually the mice have been the ones who have lost. After all, you never heard of a mouse chasing a cat, have you?

Once upon a time, though, the mice did try to do something about a cat. They held a meeting and asked each other how they might defeat their fat, furry enemy. The problem, the mice decided, was that the cat was so sneaky and walked so quietly that no one knew he was around until it was too late to escape. If they could find a way that they could always hear the cat, then everything would be fine.

"I have an idea," said one of the younger mice. "Let's tie a bell around the cat's neck. Then every time he takes a step, the bell will tinkle, and we will know where he is."

"Wonderful," said the other mice. "That is the way to solve our problem" The young mouse smiled. He was very proud of his idea.

Then an old mouse stood up and spoke. "I think putting a bell around the cat's neck is a fine idea," he said. "But I have one small question: Who is going to do it?"

None of the mice spoke. Instead, they all turned and looked at the young mouse. But the young mouse only shook his head. "Not me," he said. "It was just my idea. I didn't offer to do it."

"Ah," said the old mouse. "I see."

And that was the end of the meeting. As you might guess, no mouse ever offered to bell a cat.

IT IS EASY TO TALK ABOUT DOING SOMETHING,
BUT IT IS HARDER TO DO IT.

IV. "The Dog in the Manger"

Suggested Procedure:

1. What do you think of the dog?
2. If someone called you a "dog in the manger," what would he be saying about you?

Review of the four fables just read and comparison with other animal stories:

Suggested Procedure:

1. Have the students read several animal stories. You might select some from their reading books and use them for the reading period.
2. How are the animals in the stories different from the animals in the fables we have read?
3. How are the stories different from fables?

THE DOG IN THE MANGER

Once there was a dog who lived on a dairy farm. He was a lazy, selfish dog. All he did all day was sleep and chase squirrels. One day the dog decided to take a nap in the barn. He picked the cow's manger, which was a box that the farmer had filled full of soft, good-smelling hay for the cow to eat. The dog crawled up in the manger, on top of the hay, and went to sleep. After a while, he felt something nudging him in the shoulder. It was a cow.

"Excuse me," said the cow, "but you are sleeping in my manger. I have had a long, hard day making milk out in the pasture, and I am very tired and hungry. Would you please move so that I can have some of my hay to eat?"

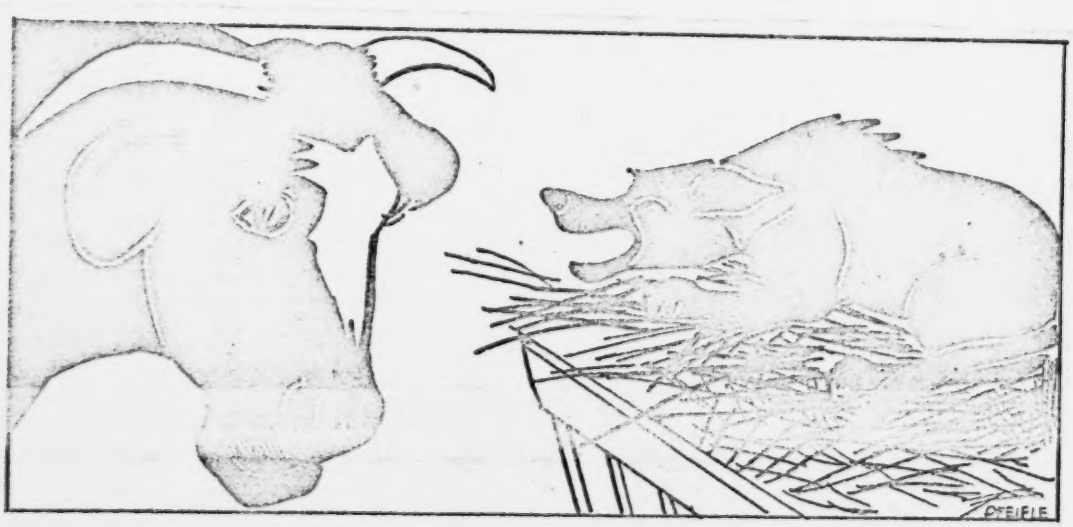
"No," said the dog, "I won't move, you stupid cow. And if you come near me, I'll bite you on the nose."

"But why?" asked the cow. "You don't eat hay, and there are plenty of other places on the farm where you can take a nap."

"Never mind," said the dog. "I am going to stay here."

"All right," said the cow, "I can tell there is no point in arguing with you.

PEOPLE WHO ARE SELFISH NEVER DO ANYTHING FOR A GOOD REASON."



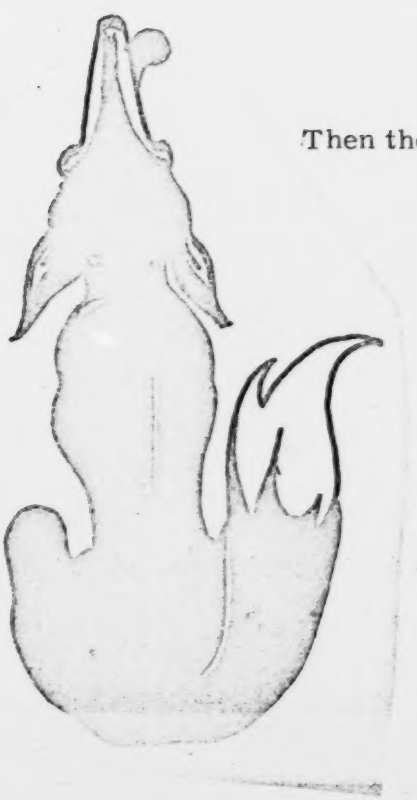
V. "The Fox and the Crow"

Suggested Procedure:

1. How does the fox fool the crow?
2. Do you think the lesson "Lots of folks are fooled by fine words" is true? Can you give an example?

THE FOX AND THE CROW

The crow found a piece of cheese one day in the forest. It had been left by some careless campers. The crow picked up the piece of cheese and flew up to the trees with it. Just then a fox came walking through the forest. He saw the crow up in the tree, and in the crow's mouth he saw the piece of cheese. "Hm," said the fox to himself, "I certainly would like that piece of cheese."



Then the fox spoke to the crow. "Good morning, Mr. Crow," he said. "You certainly look handsome today. Your feathers are so black and shiny, and your wings seem so broad and strong. You must be king of all the birds in the forest. I'll bet you also have the nicest voice. Please, Mr. Crow, will you sing for me?"

The crow, who was a silly bird, could not resist the fox's flattery. He lifted up his head and opened his beak wide and started to sing. "Caw! Caw!" he croaked. You can guess what happened next. The piece of cheese fell out of the crow's mouth and down to the ground, where the fox quickly gobbled it up.

"Thank you," said the fox, "that was beautiful music, but I liked the cheese even more."

LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE FOOLED BY FINE WORDS.

VI. "The Fox and the Stork"

Suggested Procedure:

1. Have you ever been tricked by someone? Did you trick back? How?
2. This is fable about a fox and a stork who tricked each other. (Read the first page.)
3. What do you think will happen when the fox goes to dinner?
4. (Read the remainder of the story.)
5. How is this fox like the fox in "The Fox and the Crow"?
6. Think of some words that would describe this fox.

THE FOX AND THE STORK

One day the fox and the stork met each other at the pond. Since they were friends, they were happy to see each other.

"Hello," said the stork.

"Hello," said the fox. "I have been looking for you. I would like to invite you to dinner tonight."

The stork was very pleased. He told his friend he would be happy to have dinner with him.

That night the stork went to the fox's house. Through the window he could smell the delicious smells of food cooking. His friend had made a real feast. "Ah," thought the stork, "how lucky I am to have such a friend."

But when the stork went inside, there was a surprise for him. On the dinner table were two shallow bowls full of steaming soup. "Sit down," said his friend the fox. "Please don't wait for me." But how could the stork eat his dinner in such a shallow bowl? With his long, thin beak, he could only sip a few drops at a time.

"I hope you are enjoying your dinner," said the fox, smirking to himself about the trick he had played on his friend.

"Yes," said the stork, who was too polite to complain, "I like your food very much. I hope you will let me return the favor and cook dinner for you tomorrow night."

"Gladly," said the fox.

The next night the fox went to the stork's house. The stork had also made soup for dinner, and it smelled delicious. But when the fox sat down at the table, there was a surprise for him. The stork had served the soup in a pair of tall, thin jars; and the jar was too tall and too narrow for the fox to get even a taste of the soup inside. But for the stork things were easy. He dipped his beak into his jar and drank up all the soup.

"Ah," said the stork to his friend, "I see you are not hungry. Do you mind if I drink your soup as well? I am very hungry."

The fox was too angry to answer, so the stork just stuck his long beak into the fox's jar and drank all the soup. "I hope you like my dishes," said the stork. "I bought them just for you. After that wonderful dinner you gave me last night, it was the very least I could do."

Then the stork laughed. He went to the cupboard and brought out another dish of soup. This time, it was a shallow dish--one that the fox could easily drink out of.

"I am sorry," said the stork, "that I played this little trick on you, friend Fox. But you should realize:

JOKES ARE NOT FUNNY IF EVERYONE CANNOT LAUGH."

VII. "The Lion's Share"

Suggested Procedure:

1. There are other "lessons" or morals that could be stated after reading this fable, besides the one we have. Can you think of some other morals that would fit? What are they?

2. Is there any way the Cheetah, the Leopard, and the Panther might have prevented what happened?

THE LION'S SHARE

Once upon a time in Africa the animals went on a hunt. There were all the beasts of prey: the Lion, the Cheetah, the Leopard, and the Panther. Together, they roamed the great African plains looking for antelope and zebra and buffalo to eat. Finally, they came across a roebuck, which is an African kind of deer. The animals chased the roebuck until they caught and killed it. Then they divided it into four parts. When they were finished, the Leopard started to drag off his share of the meat.

"Just a minute," said the Lion. "Where do you think you are going?"

"Back to my home in the forest," answered the Leopard.

"Well," said the Lion, "you may go back to the forest, but leave the meat here."

Now the Cheetah and the Panther spoke up. "That's not fair," they said. "The Leopard helped us hunt. He should have his share."

"Hah," snorted the Lion, "You are not very smart. When you hunt with me, there is only one share--mine. Now, all of you get out of here, quick! Otherwise, I will get very angry."

The Leopard and the Cheetah and the Panther had no choice but to go. The Lion was too strong for them. As they walked off, the Leopard said to the others, "Now we know what it means to have the Lion's share of the spoils."

YOU MAY HELP IMPORTANT PEOPLE, BUT THEY AREN'T ALWAYS GRATEFUL.

VIII. "The Wolf and the Stork"

Suggested Procedure:

1. Have you ever said, "I would give anything for some help? Did you really mean you would give anything you had?
2. A wolf said this to a stork. Let's see if the wolf gave something to the stork.
3. Read the fable.
4. What did he give to the stork?
5. What kind of animal was the wolf?
6. How is he different from the fox?

THE WOLF AND THE STORK

One day the wolf was chewing on some bones he had hidden in his lair. Suddenly one of the small bones got stuck in his throat. The wolf tried and tried to cough the bone up, but it was too far down his throat. "Help!" he cried to the other animals in the forest. "Please help me. Otherwise I will choke to death."

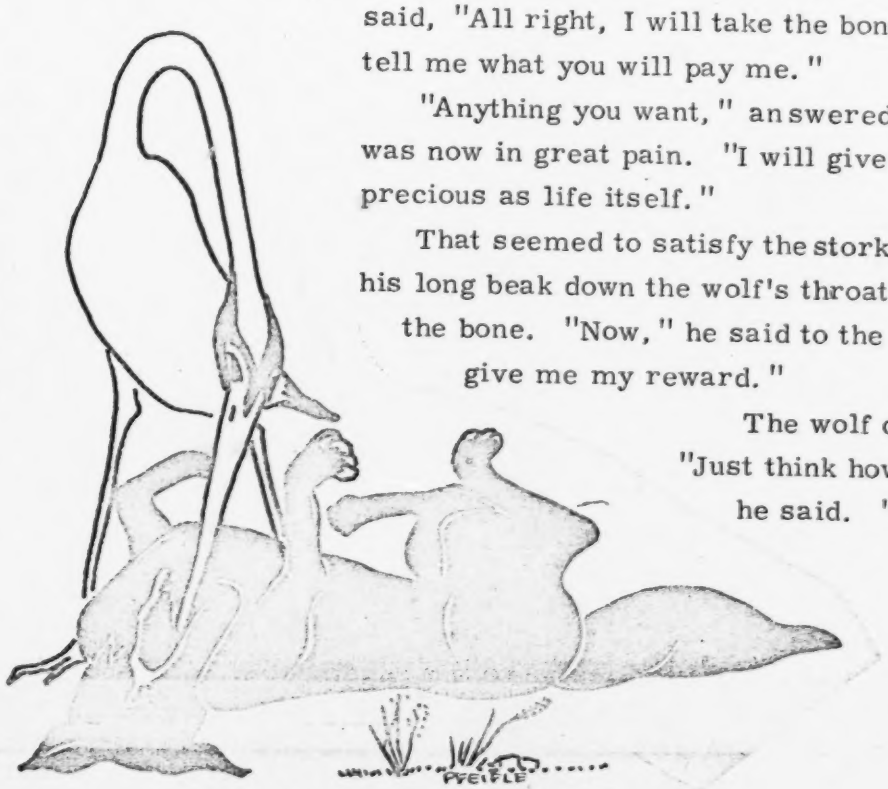
A stork heard the wolf's cries and flew down to see what was the matter. "What is the trouble?" he asked.

"Oh, kind stork," answered the wolf. "I have a bone stuck in my throat. If you will pick it out for me with your long bill, I will pay you well."

The stork could see that the wolf was choking, but he didn't trust the wolf very much. Finally he said, "All right, I will take the bone out. But first tell me what you will pay me."

"Anything you want," answered the wolf, who was now in great pain. "I will give you a thing as precious as life itself."

That seemed to satisfy the stork, so he stuck his long beak down the wolf's throat and pulled out the bone. "Now," he said to the wolf, "please give me my reward."



The wolf only grinned. "Just think how lucky you are," he said. "You have seen

the inside of my mouth, and lived to tell about it. For a stork that is gift enough. Let your life be your reward."

DON'T EXPECT GOOD THINGS

FROM SELFISH PEOPLE.

Teacher: Although we have not mentioned that every fable contains a moral, by now your children are aware of this fact. Allow the children to provide the moral for the next two fables.

IX. "The Lazy Tiger"

Suggested Procedure:

1. This is a fable about a lazy tiger and a clever fox. (Read the fable.)

2. Why was the fox clever?

THE LAZY TIGER

Once there was a fat, lazy tiger who did not want to bother with hunting any more. The tiger decided there must be an easier way to get food. Finally, he had an idea. He would go into his cave and groan and moan as if he were dying. The animals in the forest would hear his cries and come to see what was wrong. When they came inside the cave, the tiger would catch them and eat them.

The trick worked. Each day the tiger would sit inside his cave and trick animals inside with his fake cries of pain. The tiger got fatter and fatter; he had never had things so good.

Then one day the fox came along. He heard the tiger groaning in his cave. "What is wrong, Mr. Tiger?" he asked.

"Oh," said the tiger, "I am dying. I am in terrible pain. Please come and help me."

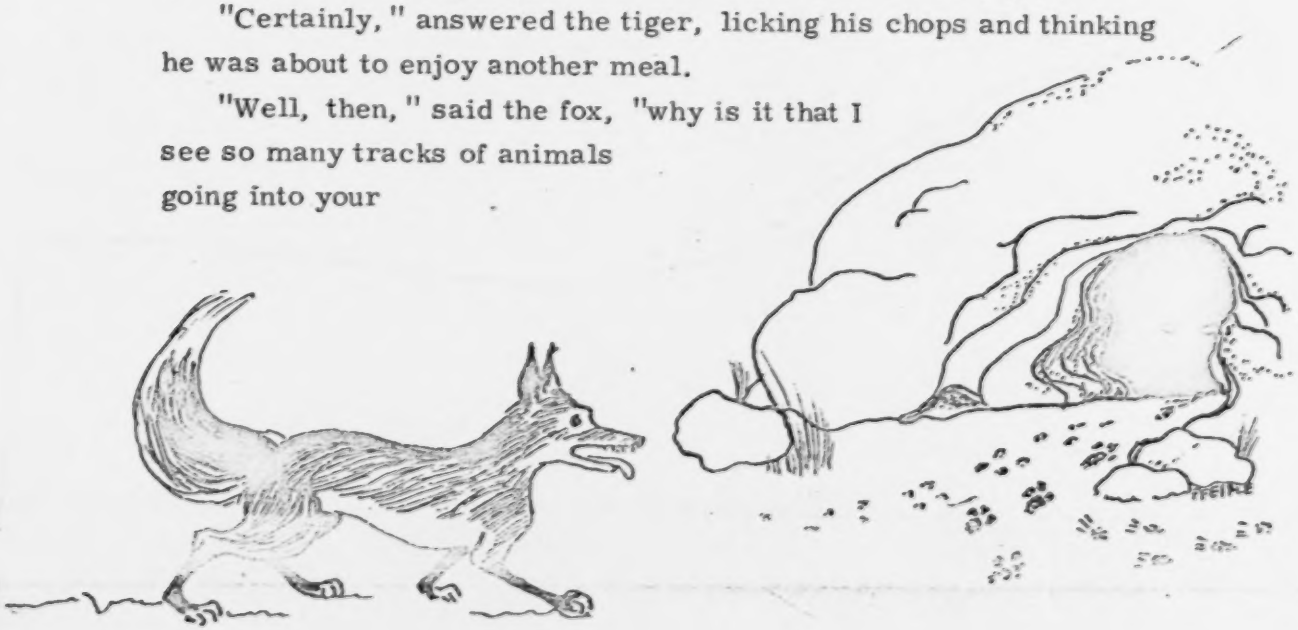
"But what is it you want me to do?" asked the fox.

"I want you to be with me in my last moments," answered the tiger. "It would be a terrible thing if I were to die all alone."

But the fox was too clever to be fooled by such a simple trick. "Poor Mr. Tiger," he said, "I am sorry that you feel so sick. But before I come in would you answer one question for me, please?"

"Certainly," answered the tiger, licking his chops and thinking he was about to enjoy another meal.

"Well, then," said the fox, "why is it that I see so many tracks of animals going into your



cave, but I don't see any tracks coming out? Goodby. I'm sure you will get well." And the fox trotted off.

IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO NOTICE THINGS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

X. "The Goose Who Laid the Golden Egg"

Suggested Procedure:

1. What would you do if you found a goose that laid golden eggs?
2. Let's see what a farmer did. (Read the story.)
3. Why do you think he killed the goose?
4. What is the moral of this story? (List responses on the board.)
5. How did the author state the moral?
6. Did the morals you made up say the same thing using different words?

THE GOOSE WHO LAID THE GOLDEN EGG

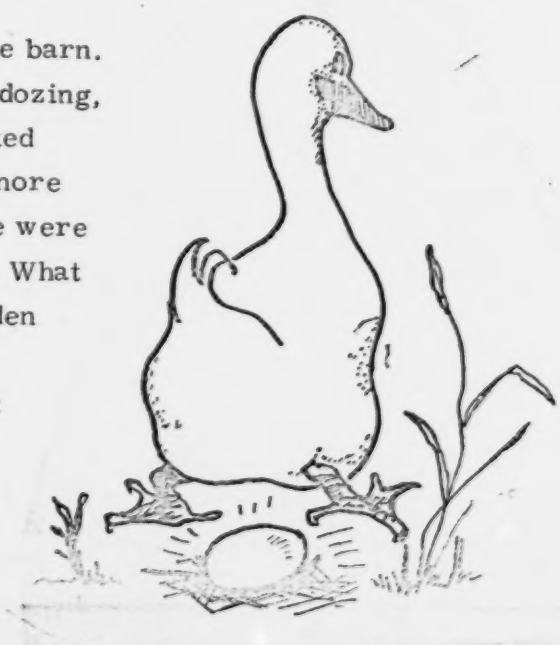
Once upon a time a farmer had a strange goose. The goose would never lay eggs. It just sat all day in its nest and dozed. Finally, the farmer decidedto kill the goose and get rid of the useless thing. But that morning, when he went out to the barn, the farmer found an egg. "At last," he thought, "that silly bird may be good for something after all." But when the farmer looked at the egg, he got mad all over again. The egg was no ordinary goose egg; it was shiny yellow and as heavy as a rock. "Ugh," said the farmer, "this egg would taste terrible."

Then the thought struck him: what is it that is heavy and shiny yellow? GOLD! The farmer rushed into his house and found his wife. "Look, look!" he said. "We're rich! We have a goose that lays golden eggs."

The farmer's wife was amazed. At first, she could not believe it; but after she looked at the egg, she realized her husband was right. It really was gold. "Quick," she said, "let's go out to the barn and see if there are any more."

The farmer and his wife ran out to the barn. There sat the goose, sitting on its nest, dozing, as always. The farmer and his wife looked everywhere, but they could not find any more eggs. "Oh," said the wife, "if only there were more eggs, then we would truly be rich. What a stupid, silly goose--to lay just one golden egg and then quit."

"I know," said the farmer, "I will cut open the goose. There are sure to be others inside him." And so the farmer killed the goose and cut open his stomach. But there were no more golden eggs inside.



The farmer's wife sat down and cried. She realized what her husband had done. "Dear me," she said, "how stupid and greedy we have been. We have killed the goose, and all because we weren't satisfied with what we had."

PEOPLE WHO ARE TOO GREEDY SOMETIMES
LOSE MORE THAN THEY GET.

XI. "The Milkmaid"

Suggested Procedure:

1. Have you ever heard someone say "Don't count your chickens before they are hatched"? What do you think that means? (Write definitions.)

2. Read the fable.

3. What did the milkmaid learn about "counting chickens before they hatch"?

4. Look at your definitions. Change them if you wish.

5. Are the characters in this fable like the characters in "The Farmer, His Son, and the Donkey"? How? (Both fables use human characters instead of animals or inanimate things.)

THE MILKMAID

Once there was a milkmaid who was carrying a pail of milk to town to sell it. As she walked along the road she thought about what she was going to do with the money she got for the milk.

"I think," she said to herself, "that first I will buy two dozen eggs from our neighbor down the road who raises chickens.

"Then I'll hatch the eggs and have two dozen chickens. Half of the chickens will be hens, and each hen will lay an egg a day.

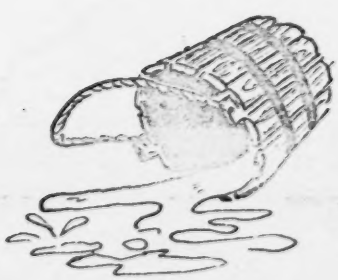
"So I will get twelve eggs every day and can sell half of them and hatch the other half to get more chickens.

"Why," she thought excitedly, "soon I'll have so much money and so many chickens that I can start my own chicken farm."

But the milkmaid was so busy thinking about the eggs and the chickens she didn't have yet, that she didn't notice a stone that had rolled into the road.

She stumbled over the stone, the pail flew out of her hand, and the milk went SPLASH all over the road. And that was the end of the eggs and the chickens.

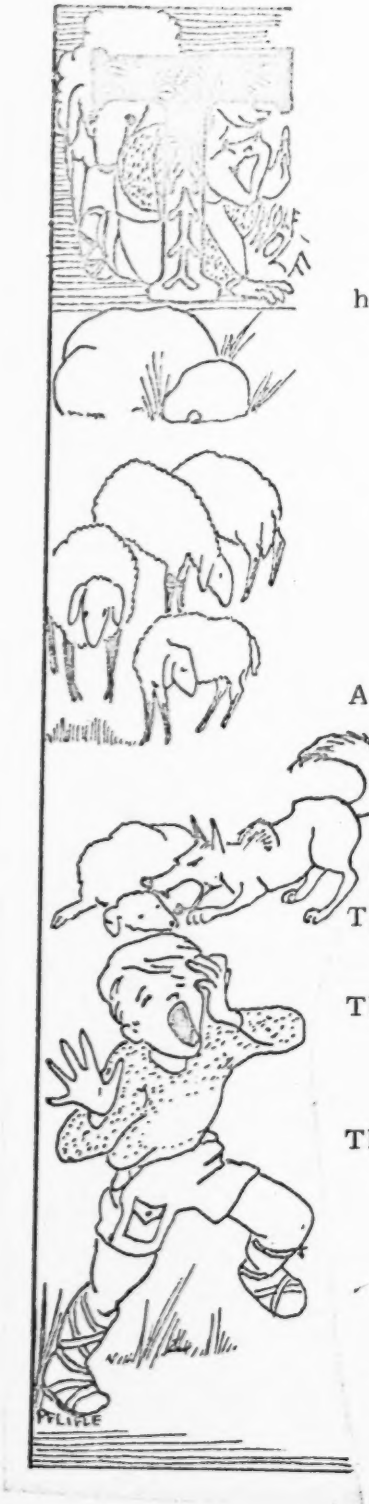
DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS
BEFORE THEY ARE HATCHED.



XII. "The Boy and the Wolf"

Suggested Procedure:

1. Read the fable without the moral.
2. What do you think is the lesson the boy learned?
3. The shepherd boy may remind you of something that happened to you or someone you know. Tell about it. (This could be a composition.)



THE BOY AND THE WOLF

here was once a young boy whose job was to watch over the sheep grazing on the hillside. The boy did not like his job very much. It was boring out there in the pasture, and the only people he could talk to were the sheep. One day the boy had an idea. "I know what I'll do," he said to himself. "If I yell as loud as I can that a wolf is killing the sheep, the people from the village will come running out to help me. It will be a good joke on them!"

And, sure enough, the idea worked. The next day, when the boy started shouting "Wolf! Wolf! Help!" all the people from town rushed out to the pasture with guns and sticks and pitchforks to drive off the wolf. But when they got there, there was no wolf.

The boy said, "The wolf is gone. He ran away when he saw you coming."

The people grumbled a little and then turned around and went back to town. The boy was very pleased that his trick had worked so well.

The next day when the boy got bored again, he cried out "Help! Wolf!" Once more the people came running from town, and again they found there was no wolf. This time they didn't believe the boy,

and they were very angry. "Don't you ever trick us again," they said to the boy. He promised not to play any more tricks.

But the next day a wolf really did come out of the forest and beg n killing the sheep. "Wolf! Wolf! Help!" the boy cried, louder than ever. "Please come, this time I am not fooling."

No one would listen; they thought the boy was playing still another trick. And so the wolf killed half of the flock of sheep before he took one that he had killed and dragged it back into the forest to eat.

The shepherd boy sat down and cried. "Oh," he thought, "how foolish I have been. Everyone thinks I am a liar; and PEOPLE WILL NOT LISTEN TO A LIAR EVEN WHEN HE IS TELLING THE TRUTH."

XIII. "The Farmer, His Son, and the Donkey"

Introduction: Have you ever had several people giving you advice on what to do? Possibly your parents might feel one way, your grandparents another, a close friend still another. What would you do? Would you try to please all of them? This story is about a man and his son in just this situation.

Questions:

1. Would you agree with the moral of this fable?
2. What are some ways you can tell if advice is good or bad?

THE FARMER, HIS SON, AND THE DONKEY

One day a farmer and his son decided to take their donkey and go on a trip. Since it was a nice spring day, the father and son started out by walking and leading their donkey behind. After a while, the boy grew tired. "Father," he said, "my feet are getting sore. May I ride on our donkey for a while?"

"Of course," answered his father, and he helped the boy get up on the donkey.

Just then, some travelers were passing. "Look," said one of them, "at that lazy good-for-nothing boy. He rides the donkey and lets his poor father walk."

When the boy heard this, he felt ashamed and got off. His father climbed on, and the boy began walking.

After a while, they passed by an inn. A pair of merchants were sitting in the courtyard, drinking wine.

"Well, bless my eyes," said one of them to the other, "what do we have here! A big, strong man sitting fat and easy on a donkey, and his poor little boy trotting along behind him. What a selfish father!"

Now it was the father's turn to feel ashamed. "Son," he said, "you must ride the donkey." But the boy refused. He still remembered what the

traveler had said about him. So, neither of them rode the donkey. Both of them walked.

Now, it was the middle of the day, and the sun was very hot. The father and his son felt sweaty and tired. After they had walked awhile they came to a farm. Some men were working in the orchard, picking apples. When they saw the man and the boy walking in the hot sun, they laughed. "How silly," they said, "to be walking on such a hot day when there is a donkey to ride."

The father and his son heard this and stopped. Then they both got on the donkey and went on their way.

Soon they came near a town. A man who was sitting in front of his house saw them and said "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves. Two of you riding on one poor, small donkey! He looks so old and tired, you two ought to carry him for a while."

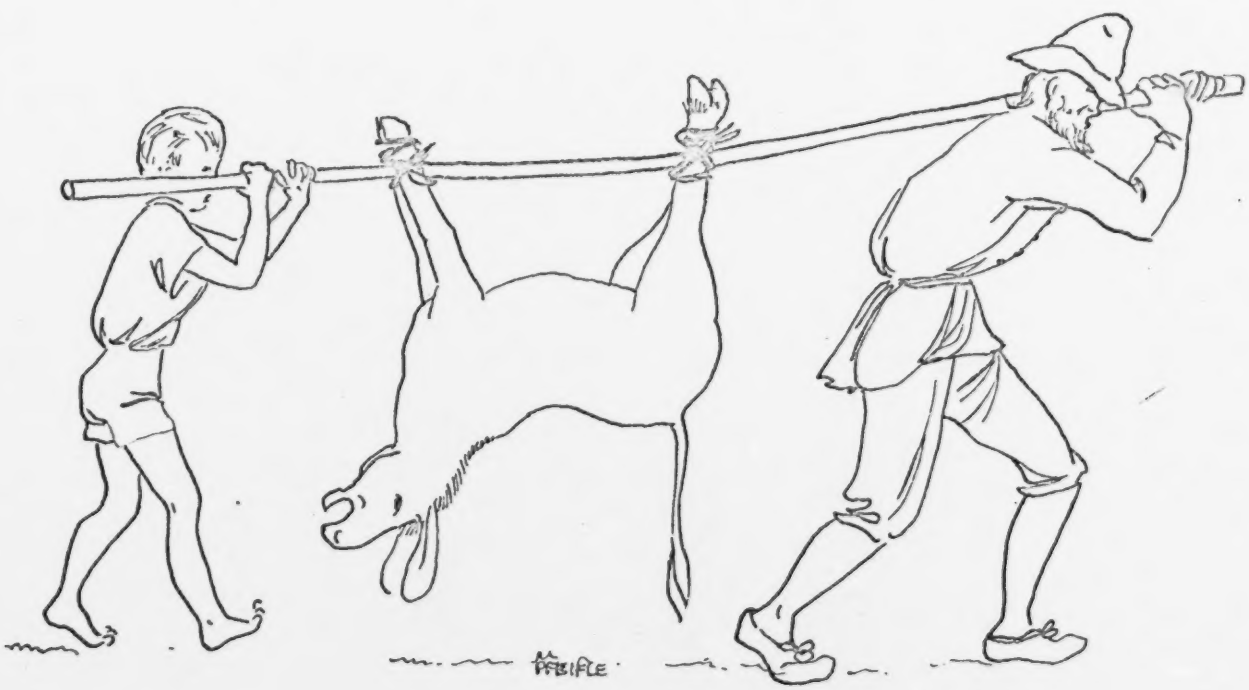
The man and his son felt that maybe they had been unkind to the donkey, so they got off. Then they tied the feet of the donkey together and found a strong pole which they put between the donkey's legs. They lifted the pole to their shoulders and went on into the town, with the donkey swinging upside down from the pole and hee-hawing with all his might.

The people in the town laughed and laughed to see a donkey being carried through the streets. Just then the man and his son came to a bridge. The donkey struggled so hard that the pole fell off the shoulders of the man and the boy. The donkey

tumbled over the edge of the bridge and fell into the stream, where he drowned.

The man turned to his son and said, "Well, it serves us right for trying to please everyone. Let's go home." And they turned around and went back the way they came.

DON'T TAKE ADVICE FROM EVERYONE WHO GIVES IT.



Teacher: So far we have discussed fables which use either people or animals to teach a moral, but inanimate objects and forces can also be given human characteristics. The next two fables illustrate this.

XIV: "The Wind and the Sun"

Suggested Procedure:

1. This fable is different from the other fables we've read. As we read, see if you can think of some ways it is different.
2. Read the fable.
3. What makes this fable different from the others? (Accept all answers.)

Possible Extension:

This story can be acted out by having different children in the class take the part of the wind, the sun, and the traveler. One person could be narrator.

THE WIND AND THE SUN

One day, up in the sky, the Wind and the Sun were boasting to each other.

"Sun," said the Wind, "I know you are strong, but you must admit that I am a lot stronger than you."

The Sun laughed. "Well," he said, "you may think so, but you are wrong."

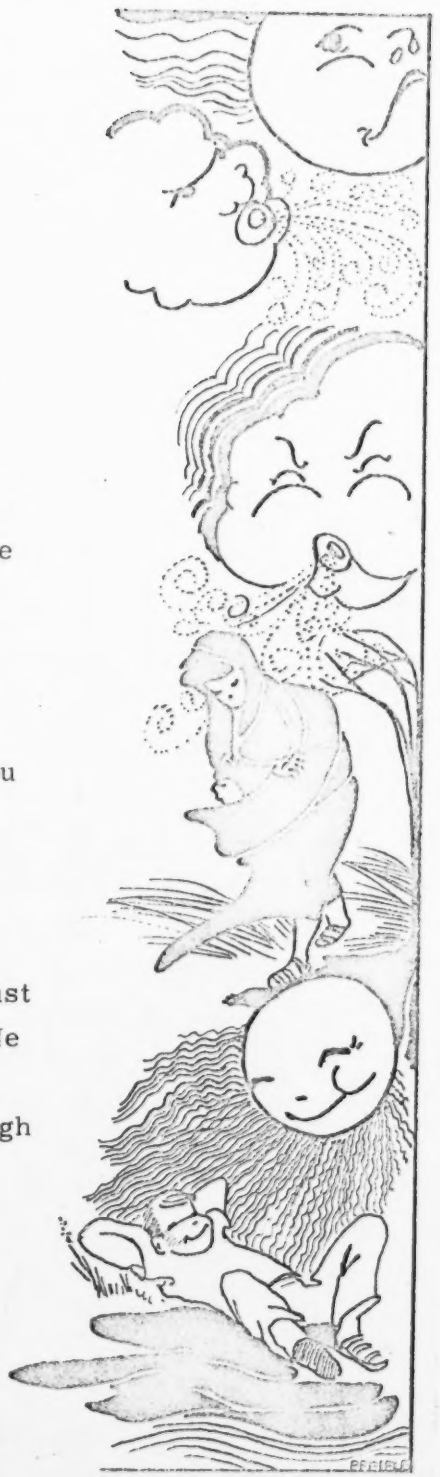
The Wind said, "Let me prove it to you. Let's have a contest. Do you see that man walking along the road down there on earth?"

The Sun looked down; and there was a man walking along the road, wearing a big coat.

"Now," said the Wind, "I will bet you that I can make that man take off his coat before you can."

The Sun smiled. "Go ahead and try first," he said. "We will see."

"All right," answered the Wind, "just watch." The Wind commenced to blow. He blew harder and harder and harder. The sky grew dark and the trees whipped through the cold air. The man on the road shivered and trembled. But he would not take off his coat. Instead, he clutched it closer and closer to his body to keep warm. The Wind blew even harder, as hard as he could; but it was no use.



The man held onto his coat for dear life. Finally, the Wind became tired; he could not blow any more.

"Well, Wind," said the Sun, "you worked so hard that now you are out of breath. But all for nothing. Now, watch me!"

The Sun began to shine as brightly as he could. The black clouds and the cold went away, and the air became soft and warm. Soon it became warmer and warmer. The man unbuttoned his coat. "Ah," thought the man, "what luck that the weather has changed." The sun kept on shining, warmer and still warmer. The man took out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead. "Well," he said, "it's gotten too warm to need this coat." And he took his coat off and carried it over his arm as he walked along.

"You see," said the Sun to the Wind, "being able to blow things down will not always work. Sometimes,

GENTLENESS IS BETTER THAN FORCE."

XV. "The Stomach's Answer"

Suggested Procedure:

1. Think of a time when you have been a member of a group, and each of you had to do your share or the group couldn't succeed. Tell about it.

2. This is a fable about members of a group.

3. Read the fable.

4. How were the members of this group different from the members of your group?

5. Suggest a moral for this fable.

6. Would the moral fit the story you shared with us? Why?

7. Possible extension: Write a short fable using one of the titles here or one of your own choice:

   "The Bicycle Wheel and the Parts"

   "The Clock Hands and the Parts"

   "The Little Boy (Girl) and the Family"

   "The First Baseman and the Team"

THE STOMACH 'S ANSWER

As you know, all the parts of the body work together to keep us healthy. But, once upon a time, some of the parts decided that they were more important than the others. The Hands and the Feet and the Mouth and the Teeth all had a meeting. "Why should we do all the work?" they asked one another. "All that stupid Stomach does is sit down there and eat."

So, the Hands and Feet and Mouth and Teeth decided to go on strike. "No food for the Stomach," they said. "This will teach Stomach a lesson "

But, after a couple days, the Hands and Feet and Mouth and Teeth were the ones who learned a lesson. They began to feel weak and tired. The Feet stumbled when they tried to walk. The Hands became so weak they could hardly lift anything. The Mouth felt dry and the Teeth did not feel strong enough to chew.

Finally they asked Stomach, "What has happened? We feel sick and weak."

"You see now," growled the Stomach, "I am just as important as you are. I just do my work in a different way. You should have realized that

EACH OF US MUST DO HIS JOB FOR THE GOOD OF ALL."

Teacher: The next two fables have a similar moral. Again note that inanimate objects teach the lesson. Before reading the first one, note question under Introduction.

XVI. "The Douglas Fir and the Bramble Bush"

Introduction: Ask children which they would rather be, a big Douglas fir tree or a bramble bush. Encourage discussion.

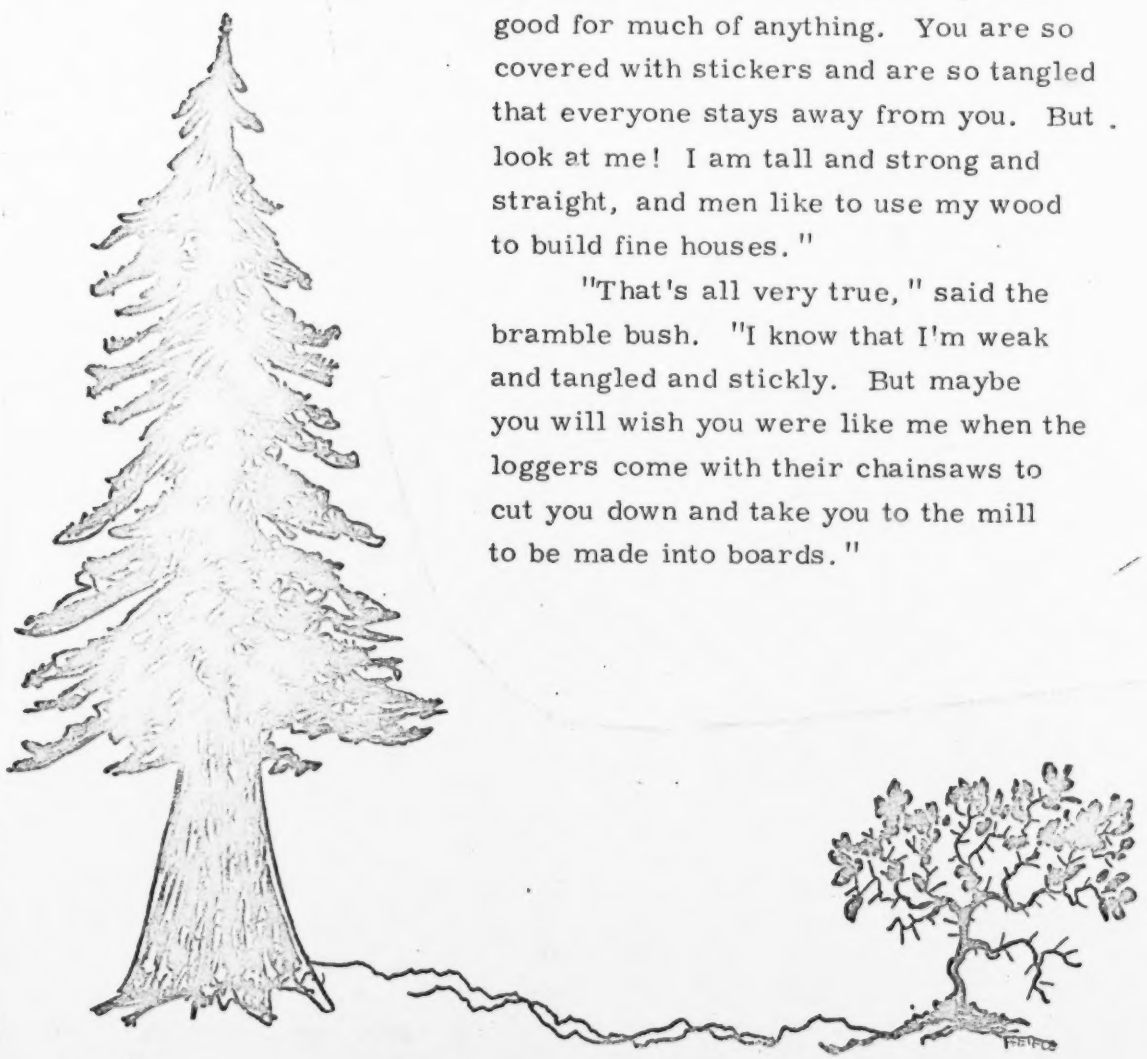
Questions:

1. How did the fir tree feel about itself?
2. How did the bramble bush feel about itself?
3. Why do you think the fir tree was the boastful one instead of the bramble bush?
4. Try to make up a moral for this fable.

THE DOUGLAS FIR AND THE BRAMBLE BUSH

One day in the forest the Douglas fir was talking to a bramble bush that grew nearby. "I really feel sorry for you," said the Fir. "You really aren't good for much of anything. You are so covered with stickers and are so tangled that everyone stays away from you. But look at me! I am tall and strong and straight, and men like to use my wood to build fine houses."

"That's all very true," said the bramble bush. "I know that I'm weak and tangled and stickly. But maybe you will wish you were like me when the loggers come with their chainsaws to cut you down and take you to the mill to be made into boards."



XVII. "The Oak and the Cattails"

Introduction: If a strong wind came along, which would you rather be--an oak tree or a cattail? Why?

Questions:

1. Now that you have read the story, which would you rather be? Why?

2. What do you notice that is alike about this fable and "The Douglas Fir and the Bramble Bush"? (Both use plants for characters, and the stronger one of the two turns out to be the weaker one under pressure.)

3. Both fables could have the same moral. What might it be? ("Don't be too sure of your own strength" or "Strength isn't everything.")

THE OAK AND THE CATTAILS

Once there was a giant oak tree that grew beside a river. The oak tree was huge and broad and beautiful. It towered over everything in sight. Because it was so large, the oak was very vain. It used to brag to everyone about its size. One day the oak was talking to the cattails that grew on the edge of the river.

"You cattails are certainly thin and weak," said the oak. "It is a wonder that you live at all. Don't you wish you were big and strong like me?"

But the cattails just said, "No, not really. We may be thin and weak, but wait until the next big storm comes. Then you won't be so happy that you stand strong and tall. The wind will break off your branches, and it might even blow you down."

"But what about you?" asked the oak. "The wind will smash you, too."

"Oh, no," said the cattails. "We are small and thin enough to bend. When the wind blows hard, we bend over and the wind passes right over us."

Teacher: There is one more fable type which we should note. In the next two fables we have animals wearing the skin of another animal in order to fake true identity. Both fables have the same general moral--Don't judge by appearances.

XIVIII. "The Donkey in Lion's Clothing"

XIX. "The Wolf That Looked Like a Sheep"

Suggested Procedure:

1. Have you ever dressed up to look like an animal or a different person? Did you fool anyone?
2. Read the titles of the two fables. Do you think the donkey and the wolf will fool anyone?
3. Now read the fables.
4. Did the donkey or the wolf fool anyone? Why or why not?
5. What would you say the moral is for each of these stories? In what way is it the same for both?
6. What does it mean to "judge" a person?
7. Looking at a person may or may not tell us what he is really like. What are other ways to get to know people?

THE DONKEY IN LION'S CLOTHING

Once upon a time a donkey was walking in a field. He saw something yellow lying on the grass. It was a lion's skin that some hunters were drying in the sun.

"Hah," thought the donkey, "if I put on this skin, everyone will think I am a lion. I will walk into the village and give everyone a good scare and have a lot of fun."

So he put on the skin, and sure enough, everyone who saw the donkey thought he was a lion and ran away.

The donkey was so pleased with his trick that he started to laugh. "Hee-haw! Hee-haw!" he went. When the people heard that, they knew they had been fooled. They ran back and chased the donkey until they caught him. They pulled off the lion's skin and gave him a good drubbing with sticks because he had frightened them so.

"You stupid donkey," they said, "don't you know better than to try to trick us?

YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL A FOOL BY THE NOISE HE MAKES."

THE WOLF THAT LOOKED LIKE A SHEEP

Once there was a very sly and clever wolf who liked to eat lambs. But it was hard for the wolf to catch any sheep because the shepherds and their dogs were always on the watch. Every time the wolf tried to sneak out of the forest, one of the dogs would start barking and the shepherds would come running with their sticks and guns.

"There must be a better way than this," thought the wolf. Then, one day, he had a fine idea. He would find himself a sheep's skin and pretend to be a sheep.

So he looked around until he found a sheepskin lying outside a shepherd's hut, and he ran off with it. Then he slipped it on over his own shaggy coat and slowly walked toward a herd of sheep. The shepherds and their dogs didn't notice him, and the sheep thought he was one of them. Soon he was able to lead a nice fat sheep away from the flock into some bushes. And snip! snap! he soon was eating a juicy dinner.

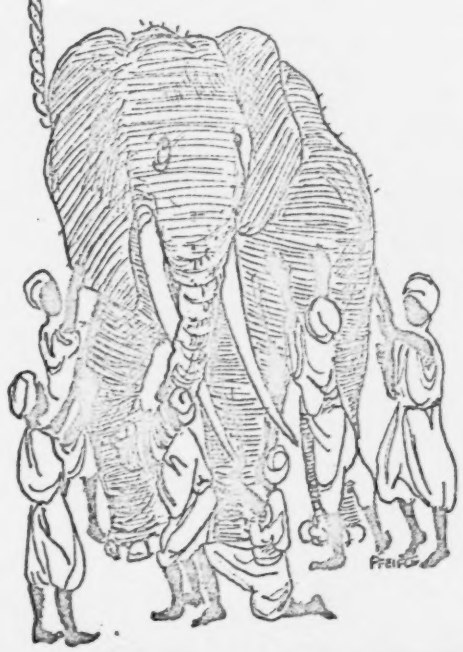
"Ha, ha," laughed the wolf, "those shepherds and dogs are not so smart after all. THEY SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO JUDGE PEOPLE BY THE WAY THEY LOOK."

Teacher: Although the moral in the following poem "The Blind Men and the Elephant" is meant for older children, third and fourth graders can bring an interpretation to it in the light of their own understandings. The previous lessons should help them to identify the moral from a child's point of view. Allow them to discuss it together and encourage them to support their ideas with reasonable premises.

At this age it would probably be better to read the poem without the "moral" which John Saxe provides in his last stanza.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.



The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong.
Though each was partly in the right
And all were in the wrong!

--John Godfrey Saxe

Teacher: We will review some of the characteristics of fables as a summary of our study of fables. Children should be able to identify the following characteristics: brevity, use of animals or inanimate objects which talk, certain animals maintain a definite disposition, each contains a moral...

Suggested Procedure 1:

1. If you developed a chart during the study of fables, put the completed chart on the bulletin board.
2. How are all the fables alike?
3. How are they different?
4. From what you have said about fables, why do you suppose people enjoy reading fables?

Suggested Procedure 2:

1. Now that we have completed our study of fables, let's see if you can list the things which make a fable a fable. (Write suggestions down.)
2. Why do you suppose people enjoy reading fables? (This will allow students to respond to the question that was asked on the readiness page.)

Suggested Titles for Stories from Maxims and Proverbs

1. When the cat is away, the mice will play.
2. Where there is smoke there is fire.
3. Too many cooks spoil the broth.
4. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
5. East or West, home is best.
6. Haste makes waste.
7. It's better to be safe than sorry.
8. You can't unscramble eggs.
9. You can't have your cake and eat it too.
10. Don't bite off more than you can chew.
11. The pot calls the kettle black.
12. The early bird catches the worm.
13. A stitch in time saves nine.
14. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

After the children have studied fables, some of them may be able to write a fable. Use the above for suggested "morals." Perhaps the class (or small groups) could make one together.